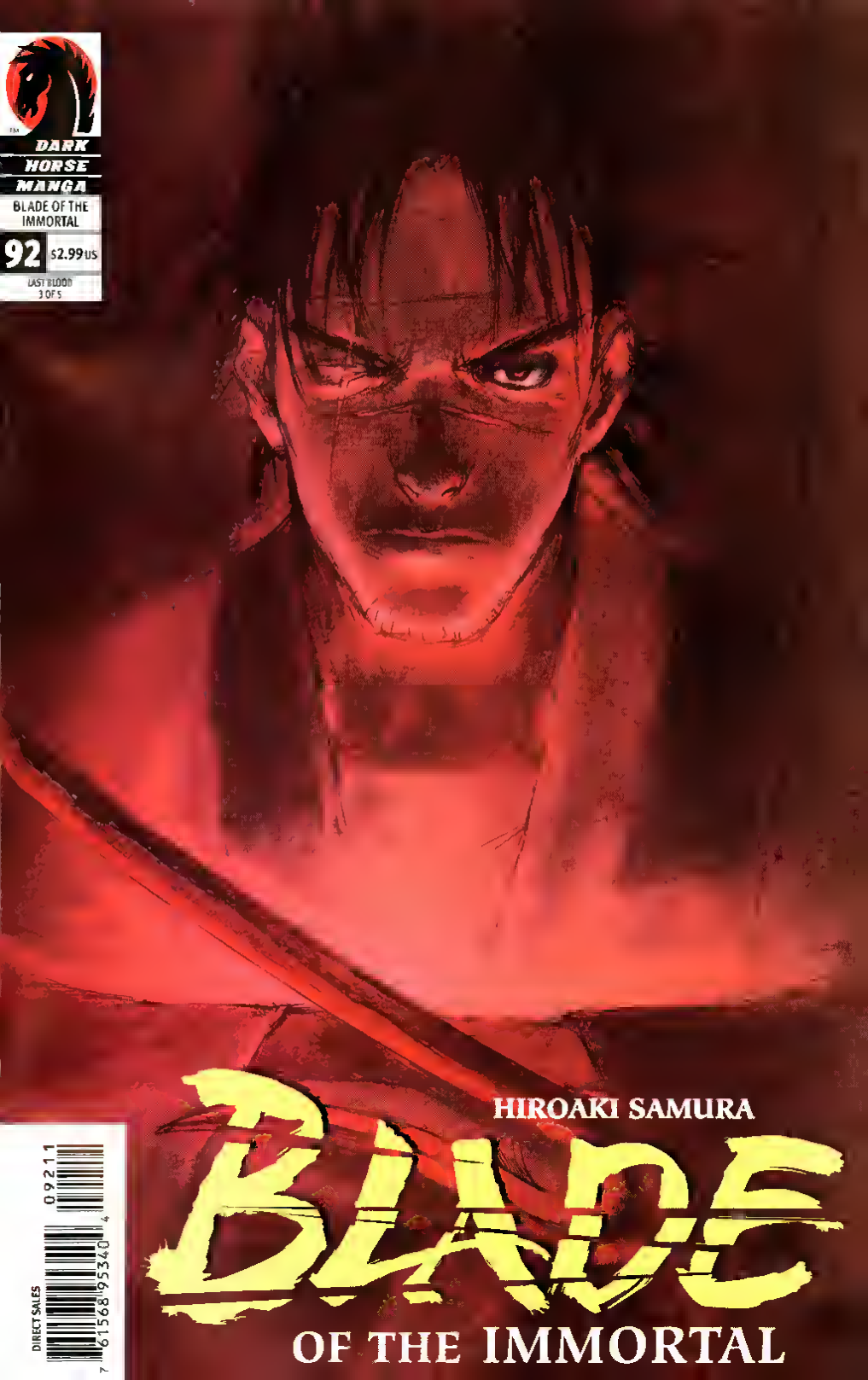
DARK
HORSE
MANGA
BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL
92
$2.99US
LAST BLOOD
3 OF 5
HIROAKI SAMURA
BLADE
OF THE IMMORTAL
DIRECT SALES
09211

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by

DANA LEWIS and TOREN SMITH

lettering and retouch by

TOMOKO SAITO

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MANJI
Immortal *rōnin*, vowed to protect Rin and aid her in her quest for revenge

RIN
Last heir of the Mutenichi-*ryū dōjō* destroyed by the Itto-*ryū*, seeks Anotsu's death

ANOTSU
The leader of the Ittō-*ryū* sword school

THE STORY SO FAR

Infected by *kessenchu*, mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality, Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister. To atone for this and for the 100 innocent people who died at his hand while he served a corrupt lord, Manji vowed to slay 1,000 evil men in exchange for the release of death.

With a revenge-hungry band of Shingyōtō-*ryū* swordfighters on his trail, Anotsu is hit with a bad case of tetanus and lockjaw, contracted after being cut with a poisoned sword in combat. Suffering from sickness and hunger, Anotsu and Rin are both caught and threatened by the Shingyōtō-*ryū* students... until three deadly warriors, Magatsu, Makie, and Manji, arrive!

designer **DEBRA BAILEY** editor **PHILIP SIMON** publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**

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無限の住人

LAST BLOOD

-part three-

HEY, TONO... WHERE'D HE GO?
PROBABLY... UP THAT... SLOPE...!
SO, TONO... AFTER THAT BROAD SHOWS UP...
...OLD ONE-EYE TURNS AND RUNS LIKE HELL... RIGHT?
BEEN THINK-ING... CHASING HIM MIGHT NOT BE SMART.

MAYBE HE WAS PLANNING TO SCATTER US...
...RIGHT FROM THE START?
SO WHAT? WE GOT OUR JOB TO DO!
MAYBE HE WAS. MAYBE NOT.
BUT...
I DUNNO... MAYBE IT'S SMARTER TO REGROUP?
FWAP
DAMMIT, TAKI! GO BACK NOW...?!
AFTER THAT PATHETIC FIGHT?!
HOW'LL YOU EXPLAIN IT AT THE MASTER'S GRAVE?

HEH...
.....
I LOVE IT.

YOU GUYS ARE TOO FRIGGIN' SERIOUS TO BE REAL.
LOOK... THIS ANOTSU KAGEHISA. HE'S SORTA OF MY ENEMY, TOO, SEE?
WHOA! HEAR ME OUT!
NOW, IT'S UP TO YOU, BUT WHY DON'T WE HOOK UP...
...AND TAKE HIM ON TO-GETHER?

TRUST THE WORD OF A MAN WE JUST MET?! NOT A CHANCE!
AND SO WHAT IF HE LEADS THE ITTŌ-RYŪ?! IF A DOZEN OF US CAN'T TAKE HIM...
...THE SHINGYŌTŌ-RYŪ'S NAME WILL BE DESTROYED FOREVER!
PLUS WE WILL NEVER...
...NEVER FORGIVE ANYONE WHO HURTS OUR COMRADES! SO! THREE REASONS TO SAY NO!
WELL... GUESS THAT'S IT, THEN.

YANG
SHEE
CHUKK
UH!

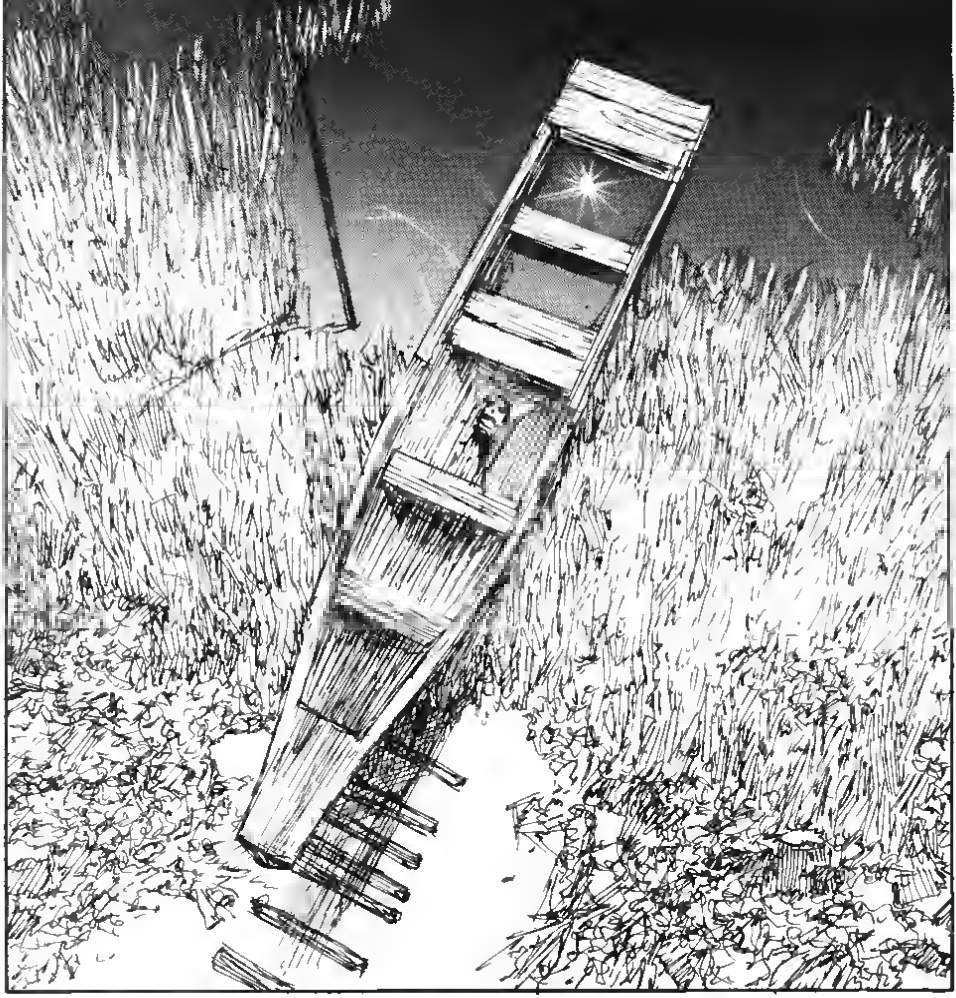
SHINOO

.....
.....

THUD

TOO
SLOW!

HEH
HEH
HEH...
SO...
THE
ITTŌ-RYŪ!
NO WORSE...
AND NO
BETTER
THAN THEY
SAY.
YEAH?
WELL, YOU
GUYS ARE
A BIT
TOUGH TO
SWALLOW...
...AT
LEAST,
FOR A GUY
IN MY
CONDITION!



=hahh=
=hhff=

DAA!

HA!

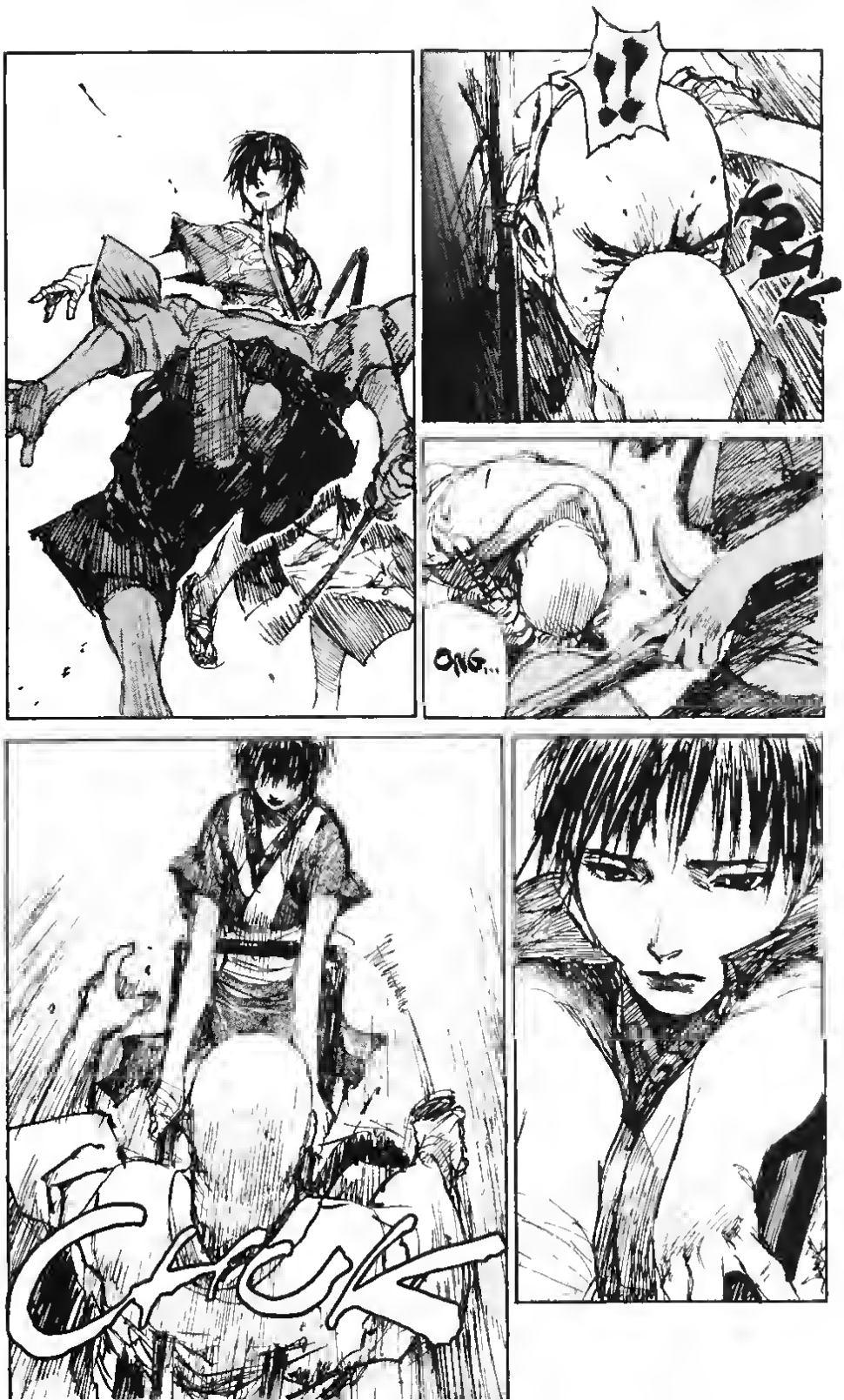
KANG
SWICK
AH--?!

WHY YOU--
?!

HAIEE...

HAH!!
HUH?!
ABOVE YOU, IDIOT!

HOW TH--
FUHT

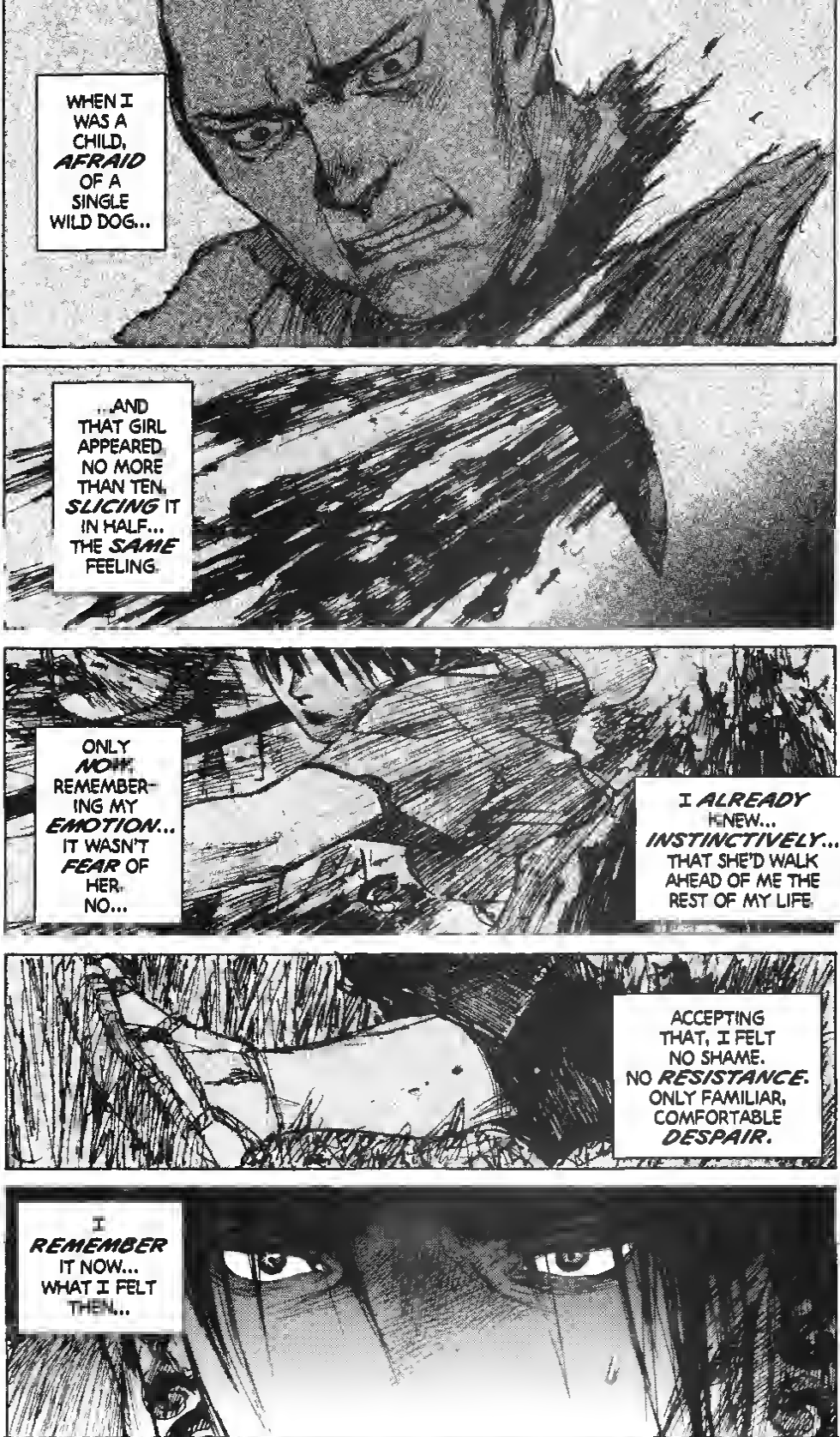

!!
ONG...
CHCK

...
WATCH...

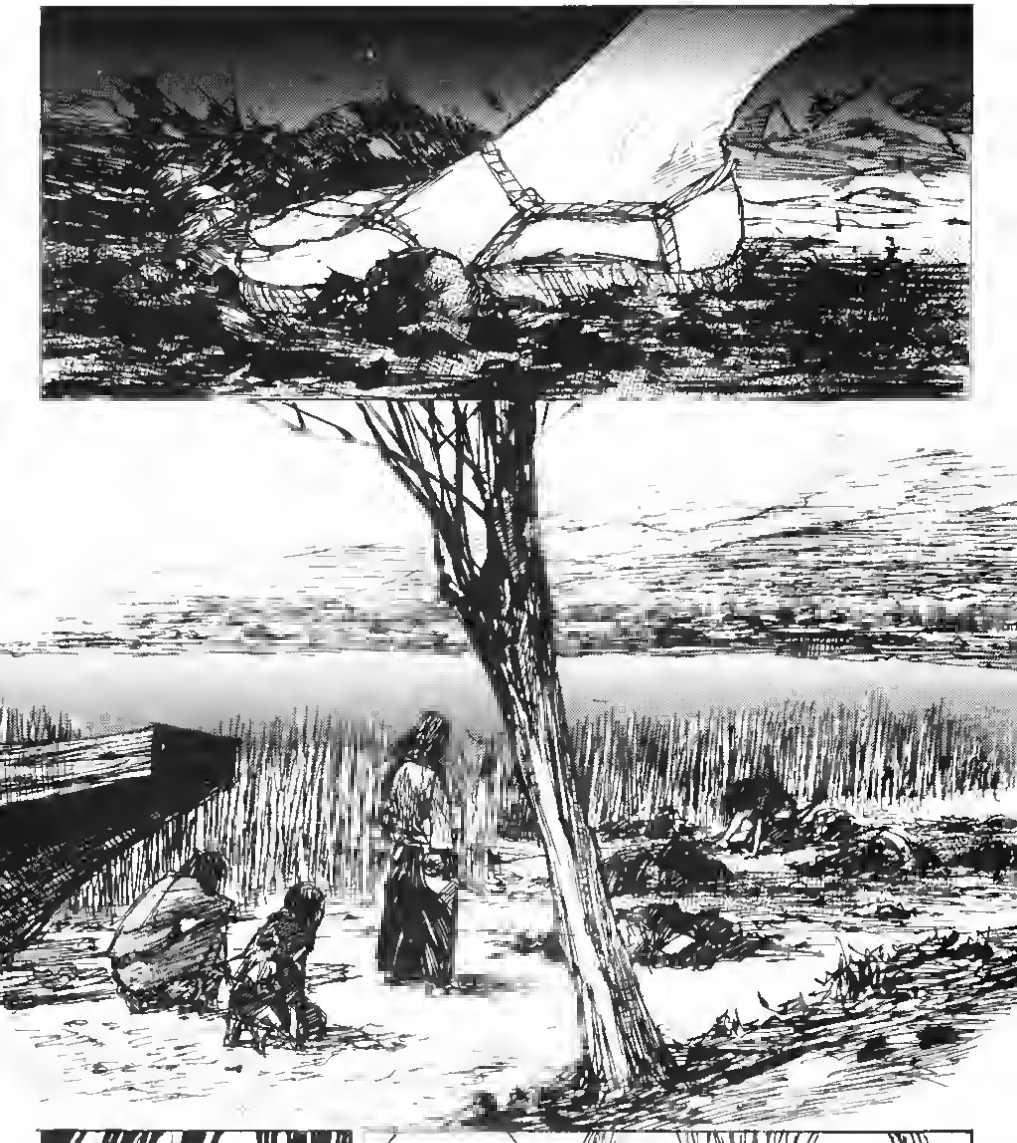
S...
SEE...
WHAT
I...
.....

I..
CAN
NEVER...
.. ...
...WILL
NEVER
BE.

DANCING
BEFORE
ME.


WHEN I WAS A CHILD, AFRAID OF A SINGLE WILD DOG...
...AND THAT GIRL APPEARED NO MORE THAN TEN, SLICING IT IN HALF... THE SAME FEELING.
ONLY NOW, REMEMBERING MY EMOTION... IT WASN'T FEAR OF HER. NO...
I ALREADY KNEW... INSTINCTIVELY... THAT SHE'D WALK AHEAD OF ME THE REST OF MY LIFE.
ACCEPTING THAT, I FELT NO SHAME. NO RESISTANCE. ONLY FAMILIAR, COMFORTABLE DESPAIR.
I REMEMBER IT NOW... WHAT I FELT THEN...

IT WAS
AWE.



THAT LEAVES JUST...
...YOU, SIR.
TO BE CONTINUED...!

LETTERS

send letters to:

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www.darkhorse.com • blade@darkhorse.com

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GLOSSARY

hara-kiri: ritual suicide by disemboweiment.

Ittō-ryū: the radical sword school of Anotsu Kagehisa.

ryū: a sword school.

Shingyōtō-*ryū*: a *dojo* which celebrated older, harsher traditions of combat training, recently led by Ibane Kensui, who committed *hara-kiri*.

ABOUT THE SWASTIKA

The main character in *Blade of the Immortal*, Manji, has taken the "crux gammata" as both his name and his personal symbol. This symbol is also known as the *swastika*, a name derived from the San-skrit *svastika* (meaning "welfare," from *su* — "well" + *asti* — "he is"). As a symbol of prosperity and good fortune, the *swastika* was widely used throughout the ancient world (for example, appearing often on Mesopotamian coinage), including North and South America and has been used in Japan as a symbol of Buddhism since ancient times. To be precise, the symbol generally used by Japanese Buddhists is the *sauvastika*, which moves in a counter-clockwise direction, and is called the manji in Japanese. The *sauvastika* generally stands for night, and often for magical practices. The *swastika*, whose arms point in a clockwise direction, is generally considered a solar symbol. It was this version (the *hakenkreuz*) that was perverted by the Nazis. It is important that readers understand that the swastika has ancient and honorable origins and it is those that apply to this story, which takes place in the 18th century (ca. 1782-3). *There is no anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi meaning behind the use of the symbol in this story. Those meanings did not exist until after 1910.*

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

The Artwork. The author of *Blade of the Immortal* requested that we make an effort to avoid mirror-imaging his artwork. Normally, all of our manga are first copied in a mirror-image in order to facilitate the left-to-right reading of the pages. However, Mr. Samura decided that he would rather see his pages reversed via the technique of cutting up the panels and repasting them in reverse order. While we feel that this often leads to problems in panel-to-panel continuity, we place primary importance on the wishes of the creator. Therefore, most of *Blade of the Immortal* has been produced using the "cut and paste" technique. There are, of course, some sequences where it was impossible to do this and mirror-imaged panels or pages were used instead.

The Sound Effects & Dialogue. Since some of Mr. Samura's sound effects are integral parts of the artwork, the decision was made to leave those in their original Japanese. When it was crucial to the understanding of the panel that the sound effect be in English, however, Mr. Samura chose to redraw the panel. We hope readers will view the unretouched sound effects as essential portions of Mr. Samura's extraordinary artwork. In addition, Mr. Samura's treatment of dialogue is quite different from that featured in average samurai manga and is considered to be one of the things that has made *Blade* such a huge hit in Japan. Mr. Samura has mixed a variety of linguistic styles in this fantasy story, where some characters speak in the mannered style of old Japan, while others speak as if they were street-corner punks from a bad area of modern-day Tokyo. The anachronistic slang used by some of the characters in the English translation reflects the unusual mix of speech patterns from the original Japanese text.

NEXT MONTH:
Last Blood, Part Four

Stunned by conflicting emotions and indecision, Rin watches as the revenge-mad Iriya confronts Makie, the skilled angel of death. Iriya's seen what Makie can do, but with Anotsu finally within his sights, a bloody battle is unavoidable. Nearby, Magatsu and Manji cross swords with the remaining Shingyōtō-*ryū* swordsmen. Magatsu, still recovering from his last terrible fight, tries to hold his ground against one of the Shingyōtō-*ryū* clan's most honorable students, while Manji, eager to finally be reunited with Rin, hopes to send a few more opponents to the afterlife. As this dogfight gets messier, Hiroaki Samura shows how he's expertly reinvented the bushidō grudge match by mixing elements of classic samurai tales and epic Western films with modern, punk-rock sensibilities.

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